

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 The invention provides methods of treating and preventing vascular diseases, by
inhibiting cysteine proteases active at sites of vascular injury, particularly cathepsins K
and S, by administering cystatin C or TGF- β_1 . Cystatin C is severely reduced in both
atherosclerotic and aneurysmal aortic lesions. Also provided is a method of diagnosing a
patient at risk of, or with, vascular injury by detecting low levels of circulating cystatin C.

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